

Mental Health Newsletter

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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE
St. Paul 1, Minnesota

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Editorially Speaking

THIS MONTH MARKS an important transition point for the Minnesota mental health program. By consolidating funds from the annual federal grant-in-aid to Minnesota for mental health information and education, we will be able to mount a more precise and comprehensive effort in this area. Specifically, we will now be able to provide better coordination of mental health educational efforts at the community level. We also will be able to increase publications and process efficiently the demands for information about our mental health program. (See Story, Page 3).

Mental health information and education includes more than printed materials, news releases, etc. It includes the concept of citizen participation and learning through direct involvement. Thus it blends with volunteer service programs. It includes community activities such as town meetings, study clubs, and discussion groups involving church and civic organizations.

The importance of this program cannot be overestimated. There is reason to believe that continuing education may, over time, change attitudes, or at least provide ways of reaching citizens at all social levels. Recent evidence suggests that there may have been a penetration of mental health education efforts even among poorly endowed socio-economic groups. Aftercare is a good example. Improved discharge rates and lower readmission rates may be the result of medications or specific psychotherapy techniques. Or they may be because society is more tolerant, more understanding.

OUR POLICY has been to deal first with the simplest and most concrete aspects, progressing as time may permit and evaluations may indicate to the more abstract. One may roughly define three levels of operation. The first is information about the particulars of the mental health program. Next, information about mental disorders in a more general sense. Finally, what is sometimes called "positive mental health". This is unfortunately less specific.

The Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health evidently confused these levels of operation. For it consigned the entirety of mental health education to non-professionals. Our experience has been contrary: not only is knowledge of specific program content required, but skills in communication techniques as well. The 1957 Community Mental Health Services Act recognizes this, as does the recent reorganization in our staff. Minnesota is among the leaders in such a move, and we predict that other states will eventually follow.

ONE FACT IS CERTAIN—mental health is a social concern, a matter of vital interest to individuals and to the nation. It is incumbent upon us who are entrusted with responsibility to see to it that knowledge is defined and spread abroad. Our decisions must be based on public intent. The measures which we take will succeed in proportion to the sympathy and understanding which we are able to mobilize among the ordinary people who provide us with good will—and the money—we need to carry on our work. Let us talk less of public apathy. If apathy exists, certainly if it persists, then we are to blame. Let us talk instead of public receptiveness, willingness to listen and learn, if we will but teach.

David J. Vail, M.D.
Director
Division of Medical Services



Names in the News

Dr. Vera M. Eiden on June 1 announced her resignation as chief of the medical staff at Willmar State Hospital, and acceptance of the position as Chief of Psychiatric Services at Ancker Hospital, St. Paul (which includes a full professorship in psychiatry at the University of Minnesota. Succeeding Dr. Eiden at Willmar will be Dr. Paul L. Dunstan (See story on page opposite.)

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Mrs. J. Lucille Poor, Community Social Services Consultant, Division of Medical Services, DPW received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy June 7 from the School of Social Work, University of Minnesota.

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A summary of a paper "Development of a Progressive Community Mental Health Program—1958-1961," by *Dr. David J. Vail*, Medical Director, Division of Medical Services, DPW; and *Dr. Herbert Dorken*, Program Director, Iron Range Mental Health Center, Virginia, presented at the 118th APA Annual Meeting in Toronto, appears in the June issue of *MENTAL HOSPITALS*.

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Appointment of *Dr. Albertus F. Dodson* of Brainerd as chief of the medical staff of Brainerd State School and Hospital, for the year starting July 1, was made by Commissioner of Public Welfare Morris Hursh.

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DPW to Evaluate MH Program Under NIMH Grant-in-Aid

The Minnesota Department of Public Welfare has been awarded a grant-in-aid of \$25,538 from the National Institute of Mental Health for the purpose of evaluating the state's mental health program.

Dr. David J. Vail, Director, Division of Medical Services, DPW, anticipates establishment of a special staff to analyze and evaluate the mental health program. Heading up the project will be *Dr. Arthur Funke*, presently Director of Mental Health, Vermont Department of Health, who will come to Minnesota to get the project under way in mid-July. The long-range evaluation will examine the entirety of mental health operations in Minnesota, to determine the adequacy with which these facilities are meeting mental health needs of the state's citizens.

As an introduction to the coming evaluation, staff people from all levels of administration in Minnesota's state hospitals gathered on June 5 for an Institutions Assembly on the topic: "Evaluating Mental Hospital Performance." Leading the discussions was *Dr. Lee G. Sewall*, Hospital Director, Veterans Administration Hospital, Perry Point, Md. *Dr. Sewall* is also program Director for the Study Project "Medical Audit Plan for Psychiatric Hospitals."

'Mental Health Progress' Ceases Publication July 1

MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS, monthly (ten issues) newsletter produced by the State Department of Health, will cease publication as of July 1, 1962, it was announced by *Dr. David J. Vail*, Director, Division of Medical Services, Minnesota Department of Public Welfare.

For the past 12 years the Department of Health has produced this publication as part of a mental health program conducted by the Department of Health and financed with federal funds provided through the Department of Public Welfare. In a letter to *Dr. Robert N. Barr*, Executive Officer, State Board of Health, *Dr. Vail* pointed out that the success of *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS* since the first issue in March 1950 has been noteworthy. The publication has made an impact on educational efforts to keep people informed on progress and developments in Minnesota's mental health field. Its circulation has grown to more than 4,500 and it has earned a fine reputation not only in Minnesota, but nationally.

In explaining the reason for cessation of publication of *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS* *Dr. Vail* wrote:

"The Division of Medical Services also has been conducting a mental health education program. In the past this was mainly concerned with interpreting the treatment program in Minnesota's state hospitals for the mentally ill and mentally retarded. However, in recent years, this program has changed somewhat and expanded, largely because of the Division's growing community mental health programs (from two community mental health centers in 1957 to 16 today) and the change in emphasis from hospital-centered to hospital-community-centered treatment programs. In addition, our community mental health centers also have a responsibility for conducting mental health education programs. It has become increasingly obvious that integration of the two separate education programs, with operation within a single unit, would be beneficial and result in better coordination, planning and implementation. For this reason, it was mutually agreed that starting July 1, 1962 the mental health education program will be centered in the Division of Medical Services, Department of Public Welfare." (Public Information & Volunteer Services Section).

Dr. Vail further explained that following several discussions between his staff and people from the Department of Health, it was decided to cease publication of *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS*.

One of the principal deterrents to the Division of Medical Services continuing *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS* is the fact that the Division is publishing its own monthly, *MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER* and cannot spare the staff required for two publications. *Dr. Vail* expressed the hope that the *MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER* might be expanded and improved, and perhaps served to fill, at least partially, any void left by the absence of *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS*.

He commended *Dr. Barr* and members of his staff for the fine job they have done, not only with *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS*, but with all other aspects of the mental health education program for which they assumed responsibility. He singled out, in particular, *Mrs. Marie Ford*, the guiding light of *MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS*, and *Miss Genevieve Damkroger*, for her fine overall effort in conducting the mental health education program for the Department of Health.

Steady Population Decrease In State Mental Hospitals

Minnesota's state mental hospital population has been decreasing steadily for the past seven years, with the greatest drop this past year. Part of this decrease is attributed to transfer of patients to the two state nursing homes which opened in January, 1962.

However, the total of 451 patients who entered the nursing homes through the end of March accounts for less than one-third of the 1,407 mentally ill patients released from state hospitals the past three months. The number of patients released from the mental hospitals has been increasing every year.

During the first nine months of fiscal 1961-1962, a total of 3,522 mentally ill patients were released and 726 died in the hospitals, while 3,253 entered by admission or return from provisional discharge. There have been 969 more releases and 47 fewer deaths, while 314 more patients have entered the hospitals so far this year than last. Except for those provisionally discharged with transfer to nursing homes, the greatest increase in release was in direct discharges.

Among the patients entering hospitals the increase has been among voluntary admissions and readmissions. There has been little change in the total number of first admissions and only a small increase in returns from provisional discharge so far this year over last. For the first three months of 1962, there have been 952 voluntary admissions, compared with 684 during the same period in 1961; an increase of 39 per cent.

On March 31, 1962 there were 6,514 patients on the books of the institutions for the mentally deficient and epileptic, an increase of 193 since June, 1961, and 1,232 more than were on the books five years ago. There will be a further increase until the new space at Brainerd is filled. Population increases in the number of patients in these institutions have occurred each year additional space has been made available. The waiting list March 31, 1962 totalled 753.

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President Kennedy Boosts The Mentally Restored

President John F. Kennedy recently signed an Executive Order removing the word "physically" from the title of the President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped.

In announcing the change, the President explained: "We want to emphasize the great importance of hiring people who may have suffered some degree of difficulty mentally. These people deserve our wholehearted support and cooperation in making it possible for them to live useful and fruitful lives."

The Minnesota Governor's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped dropped the word "physically" a year ago, for the same reason. In Governor Andersen's words: "So as to not exclude the mentally restored."

MH Coordinator; Info. Specialist Join Med. Services Div. Staff

Mr. Fred R. Hodoval of St. Paul joined the Division of Medical Services staff April 30 as coordinator of mental health education programs. He succeeds Mrs. Elaine Parent who resigned in March. Mr. Hodoval, operating in the Volunteer Services and Mental Health Information and Education Section, will be responsible for coordination and development of community and organizational education programs regarding Minnesota's mental health program.

At the same time, Mr. Brendan J. Connelly of St. Paul returned to DPW after an absence of three years, as the information specialist working in the same unit with Mr. Hodoval. He will be responsible for developing and writing mental health information and education materials, and handling press relations.

Mr. Hodoval comes to DPW after two years as executive secretary of the Ramsey County Unit, American Cancer Society. He also is former field director, Minnesota Heart Association. A native of Ft. Pierre, South Dakota, he is a graduate of South Dakota State College. He served with the U. S. Army in Korea and also as public information officer at Sioux Falls Army Recruiting Station.

Mr. Connelly was with DPW for three years as the Department's informational representative; was editor of the *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* for eight years; public information officer for the Minnesota Department of Employment Security; and public relations director, Automobile Club of Saint Paul.

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Marital Counseling Workshop Concludes Successful Series

The marital counseling workshop sponsored by the Tri-County Mental Health Center at Grand Rapids (May 15) marked the conclusion of a highly successful series of three such community-sponsored programs.

The three institutes (the other two were at Owatonna and Marshall) drew more than 200 people and sprang from the marital counseling workshop sponsored by the Department of Public Welfare and the National Institute of Mental Health, U. S. Public Health Service, and held in Minneapolis January 17-19.

Mrs. Lucille Poor, community social services consultant, Division of Medical Services, DPW, was instrumental in planning the sessions.

Attendance at the workshops, which will be resumed in the Fall, included clergymen, social workers, physicians, and attorneys from various localities.

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Children's Center Youngsters To Camp In Wilderness Area

Plans are now nearing completion for a summer camp for youngsters of the Children's Residential Treatment Center, Glen Lake, to be held starting in early July at Snowbank Lodge, Ely.

Some 27 children will be involved, attending ten-day sessions in three different camping periods. The camp location will enable staff to plan expeditions, on foot and by canoe, into Minnesota's famed Wilderness Area.

Mr. Larry Carter, program director of the children's center, is in charge of the camping program.

WELCOME ABOARD!

AN-GWAH- CHING

Neil Henkal—Patient Act. leader II—4-24-62
Joanne Votava—RN I—5-2-62

ANOKA

Marvin Cooper—Psychologist II—5-14-62

CAMBRIDGE

Wesley Engeström—Patient Act. Asst. I—4-4-62
Leone Hammar—RN II—4-10-62
Mary Webster—RN II—4-4-62
Shirley Carlson—RN II—4-4-62
Jack Batstein—Psychiatrist II—3-27-62
Laura Barron—RN I—5-2-62

FARIBAULT

Winifred Tucker—RN II—5-7-62

FERGUS FALLS

Tyria Bavier—RN I—4-4-62
Clara Hvitsand—RN I—5-2-62

GILLETTE

Elizabeth Baumelster—Physical Therapist II—5-2-62
Barbara Herche—Occ. Therapist I—3-26-62
Betty Lou Hartman—RN II—3-12-62
Louise Ferguson—RN II—4-7-62
Dorothy Vikander—RN II—4-2-62
Ann Jarrell—Teacher Trainee—4-2-62
Catherine Murphy—RN I—5-7-62

GLEN LAKE

Earl Crow—Physician I—5-1-62
Marlys J. Carlson—RN I—4-4-62
A. Grace Lundahl—RN I—3-30-62
Clementine A. Lavin—RN I—5-1-62
Lydia Kapp—RN I—4-23-62

HASTINGS

June Eppley—RN II, Psych.—4-2-62
Sue Mason—Hospital Social Worker—

MOOSE LAKE

Helen Tuomi—RN III—4-2-62

OWATONNA

John Buckley—Special Teacher—4-2-62

ROCHESTER

Phyllis Larson—RN I—3-9-62
Janet Olson—RN I—3-21-62
Phyllis Burkhard—RN II—4-4-62
Curt Campbell—Patient Act. Asst. I—4-18-62

ST. PETER

John Kendall—Psychologist II—4-26-62
Margaret Bjerbeck—Psychologist II—4-26-62

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTER, OAK TERRACE

Norman Moon—Psychologist II—4-3-62

WILLMAR

Ruth Dale—RN II—4-11-62
Florence Pederson—RN II—5-14-62

Tutoring Program Successful at St. Peter

Eleven young people were given the benefit of tutoring in a variety of subjects thanks to St. Peter State Hospital's special program which concluded this month. The students completed 20 courses, with individuals completing from one to four courses for academic credit.

One young man will have completed his high school work while at the hospital and will be receiving his high

school diploma at the close of the school term. He plans to take further schooling after leaving the hospital, with the assistance of the State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

This marks the first year that Minnesota Security Hospital has been a part of the tutoring program. Two men from MSH received individual instruction this year.

The program's success at St. Peter is the result of cooperation and interest exhibited by many people including the tutors, members of the hospital staff, and the St. Peter Public School System.